

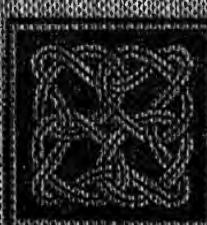
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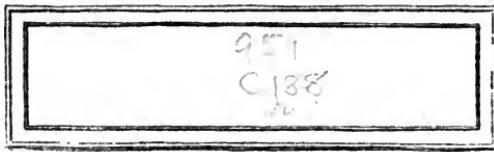
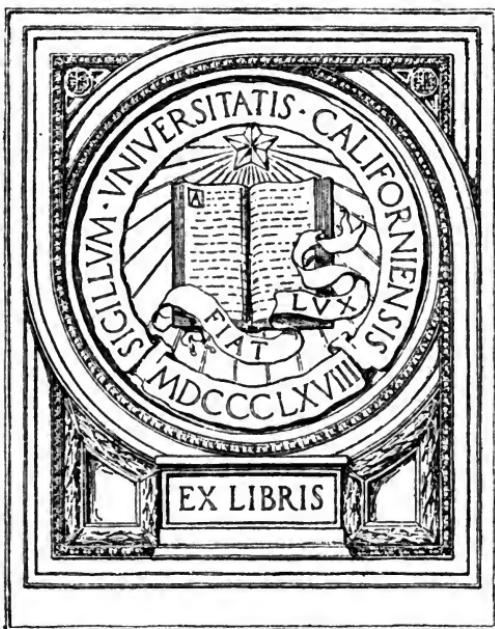
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THE
RUSH
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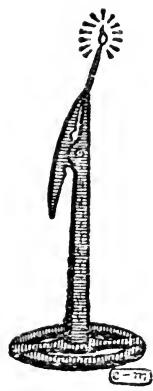


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THE RUSHLIGHT.



THE &
RUSH-
LIGHT
& & &

MCMVI : PUBLISHED
BY · MAUNSEL · AND
CO · LTD : DUBLIN &



C-m

To A.V.M.



(C-m)

Feast of Brigid of the Candles,
MCMVI.



377312

With what wisdom shall he be furnished that holdeth the plough, and that glorieth in the goad, that driveth the oxen therewith, and is occupied in their labours, and his whole talk is about the offspring of bulls.

He shall give his mind to turn up furrows, and his care is to give the kine fodder.

Great labour is created for all men, and a heavy yoke is upon the children of Adam, from the day of their coming out of their mother's womb until the day of their burial into the mother of all.

The life of a labourer that is content with what he hath shall be sweet, and in that thou shalt find a treasure.

Thy eye desireth favour and beauty, but more than these green sown fields.

THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTICUS.



HERE · BEGINS · THE · RUSHLIGHT

TO · BREAD · AND · WATER · NONE · IS · POOR · AND
HAVING · THESE · WHAT · NEED · OF · MORE? ·
THOUGH · MUCH · FROM · OUT · THE · CESS ·
BE · SPENT · NATURE · WITH · LITTLE · IS ·
CONTENT · R · HERRICK

HERE is the chapbook of my dreams:
I made it in the candle-light
(The lowly symbol of my dreams)
When I had laid my shoes aside,
And smoked a fragrant pipe beside
The kettle on the ingle-stone.
Cast not my holland book away,
Even tho' it smells of peat and clay,
Of bramble and the berried heath.
The Holy Breath is in its breath:
The very inner heart of it
Of human travailing is knit;
Its blood my blood, its bone my bone.
It cost me many a sleepless night
From Michaelmas to Christmastide,
And burned out many a lusty bairn
Of rushes, many a glowing hearth,
New-plenisht from the rick outside.—
Cast not my holland book away,
Nor spurn my muse because it sings
Of homely folk and lowly things;



Of tilling men who plough and reap;
 Of piping men who tramp the roads
 And ply their chanters for a crust,
 A threadbare coat, a place to sleep,
 A shelter from the rain and dust;
 Of herding men who keep their flocks
 In lonely glens and valleys deep;
 Of peddling men who cry their goods—
 “Nails, needles, scissors, keys and locks!”
 Of fishing men who go to sea
 In shallow cots of wood and skin;
 Of wives who knit and maids who spin;
 Of sucking babes who sleep all day;
 Of boys and girls who leap and run
 Like weanling lambs i’ the open sun;
 Of springing crops, of lowing herds,
 Of speaking streams and singing birds;
 Of quiet, kindly Gaelic places,
 And old-world ways and comely faces.—
 Cast not my holland book away.



THE MOUNTAINY SINGER.

I AM the mountainy singer—
 The voice of the peasant's dream,
 The cry of the wind on the wooded hill,
 The leap of the trout in the stream.

Quiet and love I sing—
 The cairn on the mountain crest,
 The cailin in her shepherd's arms,
 The child at its mother's breast.

Beauty and peace I sing—
 The fire on the open hearth,
 The cailleach spinning at her wheel,
 The plough in the broken earth.

Travail and pain I sing—
 The bride on the childing-bed,
 The dark man labouring at his rhymes,
 The ewe in the lambing-shed.

Sorrow and death I sing—
 The canker come on the corn,
 The fisher lost in the mountain loch,
 The cry at the mouth of morn.

No other life I sing,
 For I am sprung of the stock
 That broke the hilly land for bread,
 And built the nest in the rock!



(C.M.)

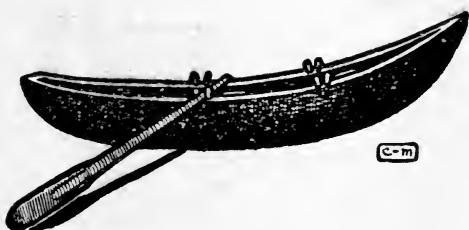
LASAIRFHION NI CHOLUMAIN.

AT the whitening of the dawn,
 As I came o'er the silver water,
 I saw the salmon-fisher's daughter,
 Lasairfhion ni Cholumain.

Lasairfhion ni Cholumain,
 Lasairfhion ni Cholumain,
 Palest lily of the dawn
 Is Lasairfhion ni Cholumain.

In the dark of evendown
 I went o'er the shadowed water,
 Dreaming of the fisher's daughter
 And her bothy in the town.

And I made this simple rann
 Ere the whitening of the dawn,
 Singing to the beauty wan
 Of Lasairfhion ni Cholumain.



A PROPHETIC PROPHECY.

"And it shall come to pass in the last days and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams."

THE loins of the Galldacht
Shall wither like grass"—
Strange words I heard said
At the Fair of Dún-eas.

"A bard shall be born
Of the seed of the folk,
To break with his singing
The bond and the yoke.

"A sword, white as ashes,
Shall fall from the sky,
To rise, red as blood,
On the charge and the cry.

"Stark pipers shall blow,
Stout drummers shall beat,
And the shout of the North
Shall be heard in the street.

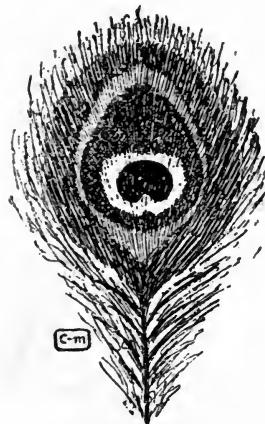
"The strong shall go down,
And the weak shall prevail,
And a glory shall sit
On the sign of the Gaodhal.

"Then Emer shall come
In good time by her own,



And a man of the people
Shall speak from the throne."—

Strange words I heard said
At the Fair of Dún-eas—
"The Gaodhaldacht shall live,
The Galldacht shall pass!"



A
CRADLE-SONG.

SLEEP, white love, sleep,
 A cedarn cradle holds thee,
 And twilight, like a silver-woven coverlid,
 Enfolds thee.

Moon and star keep charmèd watch
 Upon thy lying;
 Water-plovers thro' the dusk
 Are tremulously crying.

Sleep, white love mine,
 Till day doth shine.

Sleep, white love, sleep,
 The daylight wanes, and deeper
 Gathers the blue darkness
 O'er the cradle of the sleeper.
 Cliodhna's curachs, carmine-oared,
 On Loch-da-linn are gleaming;
 Blind-bats flutter thro' the night,
 And carrion-birds are screaming.

Sleep, white love mine,
 Till day doth shine.

Sleep, white love, sleep,
 The holy mothers Anne and Mary
 Sit high in heaven, dreaming
 On the seven ends of Eire.
 Brigid sits beside them,
 Spinning lamb-white wool on whorls,
 Singing fragrant songs of love
 To little naked boys and girls.

Sleep, white love mine,
 Till day doth shine.



THE LAMENT OF PATRAIC MOR MAC CRUIMIN OVER HIS SONS.



AM Patraic Mor Mac Cruimin,
Son of Domhnall of the Shroud,
Piper, like my kind before me,
To the household of Mac Leod.

Death is in the seed of Cruimin;
All my music is a wail:
Early graves await the poets
And the pipers of the Gael.

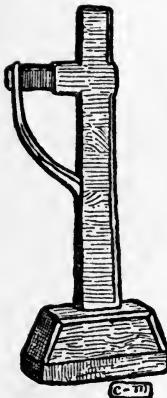
Samhain gleans the golden harvests
Duly in their tide and time,
But my body's fruit is blasted
Barely past the Bealtein prime.

Cethlenn claims the fairest fighters
Fitly for her own, her own,
But my seven sons are stricken
Where no battle-pipe is blown.

Flowers of the forest fallen
On the sliding summer stream—
Light and life and love are with me,
Then are vanished into dream.

Berried branches of the rowan
Rifled in the wizard wind—
Clan and generation leave me,
Lonely on the heath behind.

Who will soothe a father's sorrow
When his seven sons are gone?



Who will watch him in his sleeping?
 Who will wake him at the dawn?

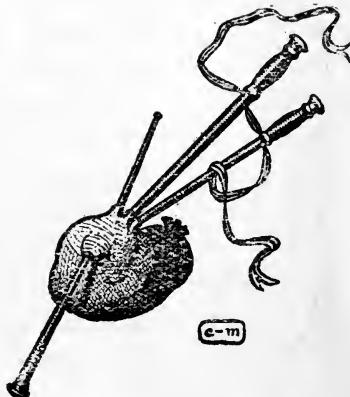
Seven sons are taken from me
 In the compass of a year;
 Every bone is bose within me,
 All my blood is white with fear.

Seven youths of brawn and beauty
 Moulder in their mountain bed,
 Up in storied Inis-Scathach
 Where their fathers reaped their bread.

Nevermore upon the mountain,
 Nevermore in fair or field,
 Shall ye see the seven champions
 Of the silver-mantled shield.

I will play the "*Cumhadh na Cloinne*",
 Wildest of the rowth of tunes
 Gathered by the love of mortal
 From the olden druid-runes.

Wail ye! Night is on the water;
 Wind and wave are roaring loud—
Caoine for the fallen children
 Of the piper of Mac Leod.



THE QUERN-STONE.

*Lucky man
Puts his hand
On “Cloc-Bhrón,”
The Quern-Stone!*

AS I gaed up the Gowden Knowe
Tae fetch a stane tae mak' a quern
I spied an antick little body
Hiding i' the rankèd fern.

His face was like a tanner's thumb,
His eye a well o' wicked glee;
The cock upo' his coggie-cap
Cam' only tae my knee.

Says he, “And what are you speiring for?”
Says he, “And why dae you come your lane?”
“My gudewife packed me out,” says I,
“Tae pick a wee white stane!”

He girned at me like a bag o' nails,
He tumbled on his peary head,
And whiles I turned tae rub my eyes
He sput on his heel, and fled!

I clambered up the Gowden Knowe,
I picked atween the rankèd fern,
And straightway as I stooped tae pick
I found a fairy quern.

It was a fairy quern, indeed,
Wi' spots o' red and blae and green,



And rings and crosses cut on it
Most antick tae been seen.

I hoised it up and ta'en it hame,
And gave it tae my leman dear,
And she has ground her corn in it
These five-and-forty year.

And a' the dealing-folk that come
Tae barter i' the wee grey toun
Would fain buy it an I would sell—
Were't for a silver pound !

But I'll not swap an I can help,
But save it like a pinchpenny,
For it has made a lusty man
O' my ald wife and me !



THE GILLY OF CHRIST.

I AM the gilly of Christ,
 The mate of Mary's Son ;
 I run the roads at seeding-time,
 And when the harvest's done.

I sleep among the hills,
 The heather is my bed ;
 I dip the termon-well for drink,
 And pull the sloe for bread.

No eye has ever seen me,
 But shepherds hear me pass,
 Singing at fall of even
 Along the shadowed grass.

The beetle is my bellman,
 The meadow-fire my guide,
 The bee and bat my ambling nags
 When I have need to ride.

All know me only the Stranger,
 Who sits on the Saxons' Height :
 He burned the bacach's little house
 On last Saint Brigid's Night.

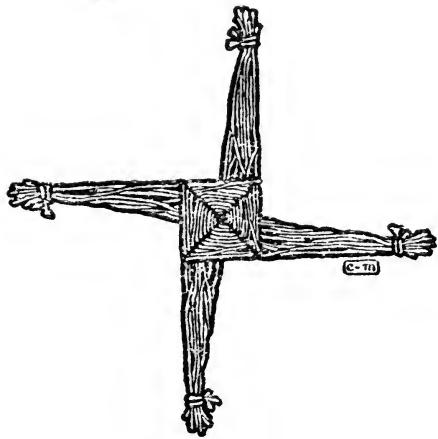
He sups off silver dishes,
 And drinks in a golden horn,
 But he will wake a wiser man
 Upon the Judgment Morn !

I am the gilly of Christ,
 The mate of Mary's Son ;



I run the roads at seeding-time,
And when the harvest's done.

The seed I sow is lucky,
The corn I reap is red,
And whoso sings the "Gilly's Rann"
Will never cry for bread.



THE MAGI.

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Juda, in the days of king Herod, behold, there came wise men from the east"

"Saying Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and we have come to adore Him."

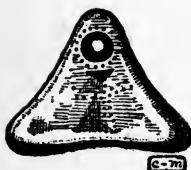
—MATTHEW II. 1-2.

AHEN Christ was born of Mary's breast
 Three kings came riding from the east,
 For they had seen His childing-star
 Adream upon the hills afar.

"This holy morn, if we read well,
 A King is born to Israel,
 And we will plait our beards, and go
 To seek Him in the trackless snow."

And riding down the desert road,
 The star with lambent beauty glowed,
 And, as it were a silver fawn,
 It moved before their caravan;
 Until it came and stood outside
 The passage of a cavern wide,
 Wherein the Word Incarnate lay,
 White-swaddled, in a crib of hay.

And seeing this, they did rejoice
 With open heart and ardent voice,
 And entering in they found the Child
 Upon the paps of Mary mild,



And falling prone they kissed His feet
 And smeared them with chrism sweet,
 And proffered gifts of great expense—
 Wrought gold and myrrh and frankincense.

And lest the Tetrarch's envious ear
 Might thro' their gillies chance to hear
 (For they had dreamed a dream in sleep
 That Herod's heart was black and deep),
 They mounted horse and rode away
 Before the falling of the day,
 And made the wood on Kedron side
 Upon the coming of night tide.

And on and ever on they went,
 Still gazing on the firmament,
 But Christ's white star, that like a fawn
 Did erewhile lead them, now was gone ;
 And tho' their kingly hearts were fain,
 They drew nor breath nor bridle-rein
 Until they came to Araby,
 Twelve nights after Epiphany.



I GATHER THREE EARS OF CORN.

IGATHER three ears of corn,
And the Black Earl from over the sea
Sails across in his silver ships,
And takes two out of the three.

I might build a house on the hill
And a barn of the speckly stone,
And tell my little stocking of gold,
If the Earl would let me alone.

But he has no thought for me—
Only the thought of his share,
And the softness of the linsey shifts
His lazy daughters wear.

There is a God in Heaven,
And angels, score on score,
Who will not see my hearthstone cold
Because I'm crazed and poor.

My childer have my blood,
And when they get their beards
They will not be content to run
As gillies to their herds !

The day will come, maybe,
When we can have our own,
And the Black Earl will come to us
Begging the bacach's bone !



C.D.

SILE OF THE LOVE-SPOT.

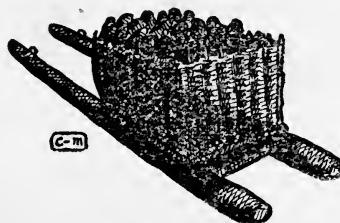
HE praised my breasts so round and white,
 My amber hair, my eyes of light,
 My singlet without stain or speck,
 The little love-spot on my neck.

He gave me cordwain shoes to wear,
 And ribbands for my neck and hair;
 And then he took his will of me,
 And went away beyond the sea.

He told me he would come again
 With silver and a sword of Spain;
 But now it is the sweet o' the year,
 And Art O Lúinigh is not here.

I'll make a bed on Eithne's Stone,
 And lay me down to sleep, alone:
 I would not weep, I would not chide,
 If only he lay by my side.

Would God the beard was on the corn,
 Would God my silly babe was born,
 Would God the nuts were in the trees,
 And this poor heart might feel at ease!



WHO BUYS LAND.

A HO buys land
 Buys many stones,
 Who buys flesh
 Buys many bones,

Who buys eggs
 Buys many shells,
 Who buys Love
 Buys nothing else.

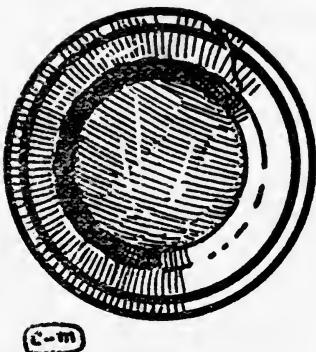
Love is a burr
 Upon the floor,
 Love is a thief
 Behind the door.
 Who loves leman
 For her breath
 May quench his fire,
 And cry for death !

Love is a bridle,
 Love is a load,
 Love is a thorn
 Upon the road.
 Love is the fly
 That flits its hour,
 Love is the shining
 Venom-flower.

Love is a net,
 Love is a snare,
 Love is a bubble
 Blown with air.



Love starts hot
And, waning cold,
Is withered
In the grave's mould !



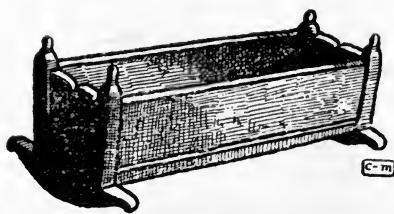
THE YOUNG MOTHER'S ULLABY.

SUCK, suck no more now, pretty calf,
 Thy honey mouth is full;
 And I will lay thee in a nest
 Of whitest dripsey wool.

Hu-hi! ho-ho!
 Sleep now, deary.
 Hu-hi! ho-ho!
 Thy mother is weary.

Another hour, and father drives
 His horses from the plough:
 See, pretty calf, his stirabout
 Begins to bubble now.

Hu-hi! ho-ho!
 Sleep now, deary.
 Hu-hi! ho-ho!
 Thy mother is weary.



I WILL GO WITH MY FATHER A-PLoughing.

I

WILL go with my father a-ploughing
To the green field by the sea,
And the rooks and the crows and the sea-gulls
Will come flocking after me.

I will sing to the patient horses,
With the lark in the white of the air,
And my father will sing the plough-song
That blesses the cleaving share.

I will go with my father a-sowing
To the red field by the sea,
And the rooks and the gulls and the starlings
Will come flocking after me.

I will sing to the striding sowers,
With the finch on the greening sloe,
And my father will sing the seed-song
That only the wise men know.

I will go with my father a-reaping
To the brown field by the sea,
And the geese and the crows and the children
Will come flocking after me.

I will sing to the tan-faced reapers,
With the wren in the heat of the sun,
And my father will sing the scythe-song
That joys for the harvest done.



THE NINEPENNY FIDIL.

O Y father and mother were Irish,
And I am Irish, too;
I bought a wee fidil for ninepence,
And it is Irish, too.

I'm up in the morning early
To meet the dawn of day,
And to the lintwhites' piping
The many's the tune I play.

One pleasant eve in June-time
I met a lochrie-man:
His face and hands were weazen,
His height was not a span.
He boor'd me for my fidil—
“ You know,” says he, “ like you,
My father and mother were Irish,
And I am Irish, too ! ”

He took my wee red fidil,
And such a tune he turned—
The Glaise in it whispered,
The Lionan in it m'urned.
Says he, “ My lad, you're lucky—
I wish t' I was like you:
You're lucky in your birth-star,
And in your fidil, too ! ”

He gave me back my fidil,
My fidil-stick, also,
And, stepping like a May-boy,
He jumped the Leargaidh Knowe.



I never saw him after,
Nor met his gentle kind ;
But, whiles, I think I hear him
A-wheening in the wind !

My father and mother were Irish,
And I am Irish, too ;
I bought a wee fidil for ninepence,
And it is Irish, too.
I'm up in the morning early
To meet the dawn of day,
And to the lintwhites' piping
The many's the tune I play.



O BEAUTY OF THE WORLD.

O BEAUTY of the World,
 O Sinless One,
 O Secret Garden of the Gael's desire,
 O Mystic Rose of Love,

O Fount of Fire,

I come to thee with fragrant gifts of prayer
 To lay upon the breast of Christ, thy Son—
 More precious than the frankincense and myrrh
 The star-led Magi brought thee in the cave
 At Bethlehem, when Christ first came to save.

O Moon of Bealteine,
 O Quicken Wand,
 O Breast of Innocents,
 O Bearing Vine,

O Olive Orchard of the Seraphim,
 O Golden Branch of Fruit,
 O Chosen Sign,
 Come hither from thy seat by Christ's right hand,
 And take my fragrant gifts, and say to Him—
 "These to Thee, Father, from a foster-child
 Of holy Gobnat in the southern wild."

O Mother of the Word,
 O Myrtle Leaf,
 O Scented Hazel of the Seven Hills,
 O Ring of Summer Dawn,
 O Harvest Sheaf,

The poets sing thee songs and canticles,
 Chanting thy body's praise with dulcet breath;

All generations bless thy gentle name;
 All nations know the glory and the fame
 Of thee, whose virgin beauty brought to faith
 The world that Eve's transgression gave to death.

O Glorious Child-Bearer,
 O Secret Womb,
 O Gilded Bride-Chamber, from which hath come
 the sightly Bridegroom forth,
 O Amber Veil,
 Thou sittest in heaven, the White Love of the Gael.
 Thy head is crowned with stars; thy radiant hair
 Shines like a river thro' the twilight air.
 Thou walkest by trodden ways and trackless seas,
 Immaculate of man's infirmities.

O Maiden, Primal and Perpetual,
 O River Undefiled,
 O Stream of Light,
 O Privileged of Women, Pure and Bright,
 The embalmèd wounds of martyrs worship thee;
 The golden mouths of angels sing thee praise
 At morn, at eve, and to the end of days;
 Christ gives thee His embrace; the apostles all
 Salute thee Queen of heaven's company;
 Thy chariot is a cloud; thy sign is furled
 Where God the Father looks upon the world. Amen.



GOD'S
COW.

IMET God's cow
At the heel of day,
And she wandering lorn
On the King's highway.

Her sleek silk back
Was red as the corn,
And a silv'rn crotal
Hung at each horn.

She lowed to me
With the udder-pain,
And the milk fell from her
Like summer rain.

And what I did then
Let no mouth say,
For I tied God's cow
To a lusmor spray.

And what I did then
Let no mouth tell,
For I drew God's milk
In a lusmor bell.

And I hied me home
By the light of the moon
To my little white house
In the Glen of Dún.

And I spared the gift
For nine good year,



Till it dried in the bell
With the heat of the air.

And I buried it then
In the ancient rath
That sits at the bend
Of the Shepherd's Path.

And from yon time
Till Lammas now
I've never set eyes on
God's good cow!



THE WOMEN AT THEIR DOORS.

THE babes were asleep in their cradles,
And the day's drudge was done,
And the women brought their suppers out
To eat them in the sun.

"To-night I will set my needles, Aine,
And Eoghan will have stockings to wear:
I spun the wool of the horny ewe
He bought at the Hiring Fair. . . .

"But what is the sound I hear, Nabla?—
It is like the cheering of men.
God keep our kind from the Devil's snare!"
And the women answered, "Amen!"

Then the moon rose over the valley,
And the cheering died away,
And the women went within their doors
At the mouth of the summer day.

And no men came in at midnight,
And no men came in at the dawn,
And the women keened by their ashy fires
Till their faces were haggard and wan.

For they knew they had gone to the trysting
With pike and musketoon,
To fight for their hearths and altars
At the rising of the moon!

A NORTHERN LOVE-SONG.

BRIGIDIN BAN of the lint-white locks,
 What was it gave you that flaxen hair,
 Long as the summer heath in the rocks?
 What was it gave you those eyes of fire,
 Lip so waxen and cheek so wan?

Tell me, tell me, Brigidin Ban,
 Little white bride of my heart's desire.

Was it the Good-People stole you away,
 Little white changeling, Brigidin Ban?—
 Carried you off in the ring of the dawn,
 Laid like a queen on her purple car,
 Carried you back 'twixt the night and the day;
 Gave you that fortune of flaxen hair,
 Gave you those eyes of wandering fire,
 Lit at the wheel of the Southern Star,
 Gave you that look so far away,
 Lip so waxen and cheek so wan?
 Tell me, tell me, Brigidin Ban,
 Little white bride of my heart's desire.



A SOUTHERN LOVE SONG.

LITTLE black rose with the heart of purple,
 Little blaebell with the eye of blue,
 All the way from the back of the mountain
 Phelimy sends his love to you.

Star of my dusk
 In heaven a-beam,
 Rocks are no bar
 To a young man's dream!

Little grey roe in the thicket straying,
 Little brown bird on the branch of sloes,
 All the sorrow that comes of loving
 Only the heart of the young man knows.

Moon of my night
 In twilight born,
 Youth is a flower,
 And Love a thorn.

Little dark loch in the valley sleeping,
 Little brown stream with the voice of joy,
 Often there comes a fairy like you
 Haunting the dreams of your white-haired boy.

Bride of my love,
 I'll not repine
 If you'll but tell me
 Your heart is mine.



MAC MUIRNE

• • •

THE HERDSMAN.

I AM Mac Muirne,
 The master of herds,
 The man of the marvels
 That live in old words.

My green bed of dockens
 I cast to the sun,
 What time the bog-fires
 Are beginning to run.

Then in the grey gloaming,
 By white winding ways,
 I drive my red herds
 To the Termon of Days.

The bushes go by me
 As ghosts in a dream,
 The maze in the meadow,
 The mist on the stream.

No eye ever sees me,
 No moon and no star;
 No mouth bids me greeting,
 Anear or afar.

But lone in the gloaming,
 By white winding ways,
 I drive my red herds
 To the Termon of Days.



THE BEGGAR'S WAKE.



WATCHED at a beggar's wake
In the hills of Bearna-barr,
And the old men were telling stories
Of Troy and the Trojan war.

And a flickering fire of bogwood
Burned on the open hearth,
And the night-wind roared in the chimney,
And darkness was over the earth.

And Tearlach Ban Mac Giolla,
The piper of Gort, was there,
And he sat and he dreamed apart
In the arms of a sugar-chair.

And sudden he woke from his dream,
Like a dream-frightened child,
And his lips were pale and trembling,
And his eyes were wild.

And he stood straight up, and he cried,
With a wave of his withered hand—
“The days of the Saxon Stranger
Shall be few in the land!

“The scrip of his doom is written,
The thread of his shroud is spun;
The net of his strength is broken,
The tide of his life is run.

“I dreamed it all in the fire,
As a seer dreams in the light



Of flying moon and falling stars
Upon Saint Gobnat's Night!"—

Then he sank to his seat like a stone,
And the watchers stared aghast,
And they crossed themselves for fear
As the coffin-cart went past.

“At the battle of Gleann-muic-duibh
The fate the poets foretold
Shall fall on the neck of the Stranger,
And reddens the fallow mould.

“The bagmen carry the story
The circuit of Eire round,
And they sing it at fair and hurling
From Edair to Acaill Sound.

“And the folk repeat it over
About the winter fires,
Till the heart of each one listening
Is burning with fierce desires.

“In the Glen of the Bristleless Boar
They say the battle shall be,
Where Breiffne's holy mountains
Look on the western sea.

“In the Glen of the Pig of Diarmad,
On Gulban's hither side,
The battle shall be broken
About the Samhain tide.

“Forth from the ancient hills,
With war-cries strident and loud,



The people shall march at daybreak,
Massed in a clamorous crowd.



“War-pipes shall scream and cry,
And battle-banners shall wave,
And every stone on Gulban
Shall mark a hero’s grave.

“The horses shall wade to their houghs
In rivers of smoking blood,
Charging thro’ heaps of corpses
Scattered in whinny and wood.

“The girths shall rot from their bellies
After the battle is done,
For lack of a hand to untie them
And hide them out of the sun.

“It shall not be the battle
Between the folk and the Sidhe
At the rape of a bride from her bed
Or a babe from its mother’s knee.

“It shall not be the battle
Between the White Hosts flying
And the shrieking devils of hell
For a priest at the point of dying.

“It shall not be the battle
Between the sun and the leaves,
Between the winter and summer,
Between the storm and the sheaves.

“But a battle to doom and death
Between the Gael and the Gall,

Between the spear of light
And the shield of darkness and thrall.

"And the Gael shall have the mastery
After a month of days,
And the lochs of the West shall cry,
And the hills of the North shall blaze.

"And the neck of the fair-haired Gall
Shall be as a stool for the feet
Of Ciaran, chief of the Gael,
Sitting in Emer's seat!"—

. . . .
At this Mac Giolla fainted,
Tearing his iron hair,
And the young men cursed the Stranger,
And the old men mouthed a prayer.

For they knew the day would come,
As sure as the piper said,
When many loves would be parted,
And many graves would be red.

And the wake broke up in tumult,
And the women were left alone,
Keening over the beggar
That died at Gobnat's Stone.



SAINT BRIGID'S CHURN-SONG.

O RÓ, oró, my little churn,
 If you Saint Brigid's love would earn,
 Come take the staff and strike a turn,
 And Christ will give the butter.

Christ's blessing on my little churn,
 Christ's blessing on my little churn,
 Christ's blessing on my little churn,
 And on my vats and dishes !

This byre is clean and sweet to smell,
 And in it Christ has come to dwell :
 I'll praise Him with my book and bell,
 And light a white king-candle.

Christ's blessing on my little churn,
 Christ's blessing on my little churn,
 Christ's blessing on my little churn,
 And on my vats and dishes !

I'll cut the curd in seven parts
 In honour of the seven darts
 That pierced the Mother's heart of hearts,
 And made it bleed for sorrow.

Christ's blessing on my little churn,
 Christ's blessing on my little churn,
 Christ's blessing on my little churn,
 And on my vats and dishes !



And I will cut another share
 To stop the whining bacach's prayer,
 And then the siskins in the air
 Will get the fragments over.

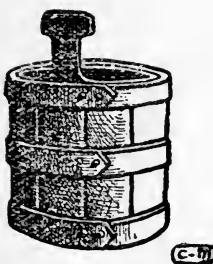
Christ's blessing on my little churn,
Christ's blessing on my little churn,
Christ's blessing on my little churn,
And on my vats and dishes !



I WISH . . .
 . . . AND I WISH.

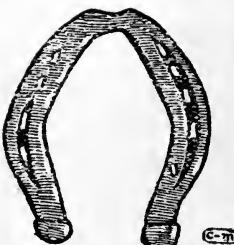
I WISH and I wish
 And I wish I were
 A golden bee
 In the blue of the air,
 Winging my way
 At the shut of day
 To the honey-marges
 Of Loch-ciuin-ban ;
 Or a little green drake,
 Or a silver swan,
 Floating upon
 The Stream of Aili,
 And I to be swimming
 Gaily, gaily !

I wish and I wish
 And I wish I could be
 A bud on a branch
 Of the red-thorn tree
 That blows at the head
 Of Blanaid's Bed,
 And sheds a petal
 At every breath ;
 Or a poppy-flower
 In the scented swath
 That the reapers reap
 In the hills of Easa,
 For sacrifice
 To the dread Lúghnasa.



I wish and I wish
 It could come to pass
 That I would be changed
 To a leaf of grass,
 Growing green
 On Tulach-caoin,
 Where Caoimhin and Conn
 And Ciaran sleep,
 And I to be rooted
 Strong and deep
 In the hearts of the Three
 Who fell in slaughter
 For love of Eilit,
 The Druid's daughter.

If wishes had wings
 I would not stay,
 But Wine would wile
 My soul away ;
 And Love would creep
 Into my sleep
 As soft as a dream
 At evenfall,
 When the crickets sing
 And the curlews call ;
 And 'tis I would wake
 For no new Morrow
 On the grey round
 Of this world of sorrow !



CIARAN OF THE HORSES.

CIARAN, the master
Of horses and lands,
Once had no more than
The horn on his hands.

But Ciaran is rich now,
And Ciaran is great,
And rides with the air
Of a squire of estate.

Saint Mel! and to see the man
Up on the back
Of a thoroughbred gelding,
A bay or a black!

There's not a horse-breeder
From Banna to Laoi
Can handle the snaffle
So pretty as he!

And Ciaran, for all,
Has the wit of a child—
A heart just as soft,
And an eye just as mild.

No maker of ballads
Puts curse at his door:
He handsels the singer,
And harbours the poor.

For Ciaran, the master
Of horses and lands,
Once had no more than
The horn on his hands.



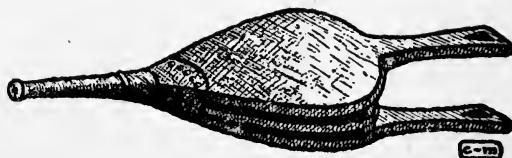
MY SUMMER-HOUSE.



Y summer-house
Is white with lime,
And roses blow
About the door,
And columbines
And gentle lady-flowers,
And fuchsias
And the carmine fairy-cap,
And rose-mallow
And red crow-toes,
And the fringed jessamine.

All day long
On the thorn before the door
The mellow blackbird pipes ;
And thither echoes come
Of the long, low wash of the sea,
And of the shy call
Of the hill-plover on the hill,
And of the plaintful song
Of the turf-cutters in the bog.

O, my house
Is a house of happiness,
My house
Is a house of love.



THE LOST CHILD

“**O** ARY! Mother!”
 Murmured the child,
 Mazily wandering
 In the grey wild.

“By a wan water
 Sionan, your son,
 Wanders in shadow,
 Lost to his kin.”

Mary in heaven
 Heard her sweet name,
 Hied her to earth
 On an arrow of flame.

Brigid came after,
 Lasair and Cleir,
 Eithne the Ruddy
 And Fedhelma the Fair.

Softly they circled
 About the grey stone,
 Where Sionan was sitting,
 Singing his lone.

Mary came to him,
 And said in his ear—
 “Sionan, my sorrow,
 The Mother is here.

“Come unto Christ,
 Who'll make you a star,



To dream in the dusk
When the summer is fair."

She took him to Christ
(As wise-women say)
Who made him a star
At the mouth of the day.

And gloamings a many
I've seen the star shine
In the eye of Loch Aluinn—
A ruby in wine.



THE GOLDEN HILLS OF BAILE-EOCAIN.

ICAME across from Muirloch
 By the storied Stream of Mael
 To the Golden Hills of Baile-eocain, O !
 The misty bloom of April-time
 Lay like a bridal veil
 On the Golden Hills of Baile-eocain, O !
 And down from Cuil-na-gcopog,
 Gleann-seisg, and Croc-an-air
 A hundred silver streamlets danced
 Before the dawning fire,
 And the mottled thrushes in the trees
 Sang songs of deep desire
 To the Golden Hills of Baile-eocain, O !
 The dew-eyed maid of Muirloch
 Tripped lightly by my side
 To the Golden Hills of Baile-eocain, O !
 Her heart beat time with mine,
 For she was to be my bride,
 In the Golden Hills of Baile-eocain, O !
 And all the yellow money
 My father's budgets hold,
 And store of milk and honey
 My mother's crocks unfold,
 Together we would share,
 Till our hearts were hoar and old
 Like the Golden Hills of Baile-eocain, O !
 O, where in Eire's ends
 Is there sight for mortal eye
 Like the Golden Hills of Baile-eocain, O !



With the tasselled fern and crotal
Blowing softly to the sky,
On the Golden Hills of Baile-eocain, O !
And nestling deep between,
Like a pigeon in her nest,
Our little house of happiness,
By Love and Plenty blest,
Where Sorrow never comes
To break in upon the rest
Of the Golden Hills of Baile-eocain, O !



THE
SEA-FIELD.

THE sowans steeped, the spinning done,
(Mournfully, sing mournfully)—
 Three barths of rushes cut and peeled,
 The hearthstone swept, the supper on—
 And where may Rose ni Gadhra be?
(Mournfully, sing mournfully :
A drownèd face is sore to see)—
 She left the house ere dayli'gone
 To fetch her cattle from the field—
 My sorrow on the sea-field !

The clock is stopped, the fire is dead ;
(Mournfully, sing mournfully)—
 The evening tide is making moan
 On Maam, beyond The Skipping-Stone ;
 Sea-bells are knelling dolefully.
(Mournfully, sing mournfully :
A drownèd face is sore to see)—
 The sun is set on Seanad Head ;
 The rising moon looks deadly wan—
 O never, never, night or dawn,
 Will Rose ni Gadhra come to me !



MARY AND BRIGID.

LITTLE mother, come near to me:
 Leave the singing pot on the hearth,
 And the singing crickets round it,
 And come to my little cot of rushes,
 And listen to what I tell you."

"I am with you, childeen."

"Look, look, O little mother!
 I see Mary and Brigid:
 Mary is turning the wheel of the stars,
 And Brigid sits at her white loom,
 Weaving the veil of purple cloth
 That covers the door of Heaven.—
 Listen, little mother, do you hear?"

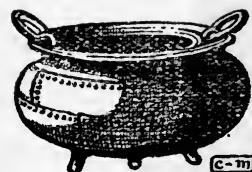
"No, childeen, I hear no sound."

"I hear Mary singing,
 Turning the wheel of the stars,
 And Brigid singing,
 Sitting at her white loom."

"What are they singing, love?"

"A song of sleep, O little mother.
 I will sleep now softly,
 For they are singing to me."

"Sleep, childeen, sleep."



C-111

SEEDING

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— —

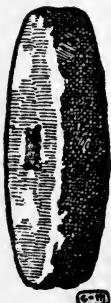
SONG.

*The wind sings when it wills,
As the stream sings in the wood,
As the pot sings on the hob,
As the bird sings on the tree.*

Séó-hin ! séó-hó !
 Hither and thither,
 About and below.
 The morrow comes
 Saint Ciaran's day,
 And we must work
 Before we play.

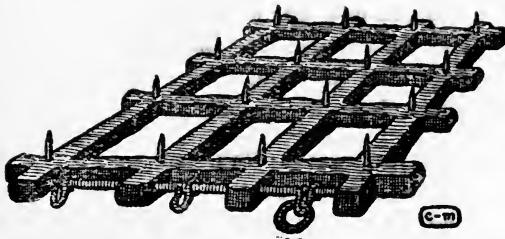
*Séó-hin ! séó-hó !
Hither and thither,
About and below.
The winnowing wind
Doth airily blow :
The broken furrow
Is quick and kind,
And I go warily
Out to sow.*
*Séó-hin ! séó-hó !
Hither and thither,
About and below.*

*Séó-hin ! séó-hó !
Hither and thither,
About and below.
The seed is sweet,
And the sheet is dry :*



The kittiwakes scream,
And the starlings cry
After my feet
Right merrily.
Merrily, merrily
Shall they shout
When the awn is up,
And the ear is out!

*The seed stirs in the clay,
As the babe stirs in the womb,
As the flame stirs in the fire,
As the wish stirs in the heart.*



HARVEST SONG.

O REAPERS and gleaners,
Come dance in the sun :
The last sheaves are stooked,
And the harvest is done.

The thistle-finch sings,
And the corn-plover cries,
And the bee and the moth
Flit about in the skies.

For Jesus has quickened
The seed in the mould,
And turned the green ears
Of the summer to gold.

The hill-folk all winter
Have clamoured for bread,
And here is enough
For a host to be fed !

Last year was a lean year,
And this is a fat,
And poor folk have cause
To be thankful for that.

So, reapers and gleaners,
Come dance in the sun,
And praise Mary's Child
That the harvest is done.



THE MAY-FIRE.

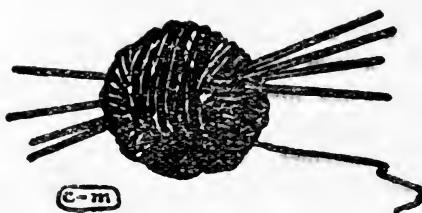
AOME away, O Maire Ban,
 Come away, come away
 Where the heads of *ceanabhan*
 Tremble in the twilight air,
 And the rushes nod and sway,
 And no other sound is heard
 But the swaying of the rushes,
 And the shouts from Croc-an-air,
 And the crooning of the fidils,
 And the laughing of the dancers
 Round about the sacred fire,
 And the lonely crying of the water-bird.

Come away, O life of me,
 O bone of me, O blood of me—
 Feidhlim has a tale to tell:
 He would own his love for thee,
 Smitten first at Mura's Well,
 Bitten at the Lammas pattern,
 By the blessed Mura's Well.
 He would tell thee, Maire Ban,
 How his pulses leap and thrill
 Quicker than the old men's fidils,
 Crooning out from yonder hill.

Come away, O heart's desire,
 From the ruddy-featured circle,
 From the story-telling circle,
 By the wreathing Bealtein fire.
 Come away, come away,



Come away, O Maire Ban,
Where the heads of *céanabhan*
Tremble in the twilight air,
And the voice of Love is heard
Whispering o'er the bending rushes
Like a hidden, holy bird.
Come away, O Maire Ban—
Feidhlim's face is fairy-wan,
Feidhlim's heart is sick and pale,
Languishing for love of thee.



THE SHROUDING-SHEET.

"**A**HAT are you spinning, Fire o' Wine—
A dimity gown for your wedding day?
It must be that, your little red wheel
Goes whirring round so merrily."

"Nay, Mother, but spinning my shrouding-sheet
Of lint as white as the driven snow:
The Little Green Men are calling me,
And I am fain to rise and go.

"My Love came riding from the south—
He took me with a look and a sigh;
But he went riding back again,
And left me here to pine and die.

"Smoor the fire within the hearth,
Stop the clock, and make no moan:
The wine-flower whitens on my cheek,
And my heart is cold as a stone!"



I MET AN OLD MAN IN THE ORCHARD GREEN.

IMET an old man in the orchard green,
 And his cheek was as brown as a jenneting,
 And his nose was red, and his eye was grey,
 And his beard was as white as the ring-of day.
 "What are you doing, my sorrow," says he,
 "Upon my sacred apple-tree?"

He looked as cross as a cripple's stick,
 And he blew so big and he breathed so thick
 That I dropped my hairy cap, and ran
 As fast as the mountainy Leath-brogan.

"Come back, my joy, come back," says he,
 As soft as the hum of a honey-bee—
 "If thirsty take one,
 If hungry take two,
 But if you take three
 I take you!"

I met an old hag in the turnip-field,
 And her bones were as bare as a herring-creel,
 And her teeth were black, and her nose was blae,
 And her breath was as cold as November Day.

"What are you after, my sorrow?" says she—
 "You're come to steal my property!"

She looked as cross as a clocking hen,
 And she started so to sidle and stenn
 That I ups and over the march away,
 Like Domhnall-na-Greine at shut of day.

"Come back, my joy, come back," says she,
 As soft as the hush of a fairy tree—
 "If thirsty take one,
 If hungry take two,
 But if you take three
 I take you!"



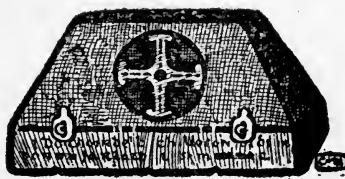
THE SHRINE.

I WILL make a shrine of the seven woods
 That saved my father's seed,
 And offer it, with cattle and lands,
 To Patraic and Colm and Brigid.

The fruitful palm that Adam found,
 The battle-signet of God,
 And the maple-tree of Noah's Ark,
 And the almond of Moses' Rod.

And the four sweet woods of Calvary Cross,
 On which the Man-Christ died,
 Cypress and cedar and scented pine,
 And birch from Kedron side.

And I will kneel at the Latin stone
 That covers the Virgin Three,
 And pray that I may look on the dawn
 That breaks on Banba free !



THE HERB-LEECH.



HAVE gathered *luss*
At the wane of the moon,
And supped its sap
With a yewen spoon.

I have sat a spell
By the carn of Medbh,
And smelt the mould
Of the red queen's grave.

I have dreamed a dearth
In the darkened sun,
And felt the hand
Of the Evil One.

I have fathomed war
In the comet's tail,
And heard the crying
Of Gall and Gael.

I have seen the spume
On the dead priest's lips,
And the "holy fire"
On the spars of ships;

And the shooting stars
On Barthelmy's Night,
Blanching the dark
With ghostly light;

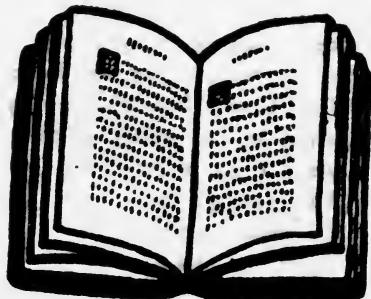
And the corpse-candle
Of the seer's dream,
Bigger in girth
Than a weaver's beam;



C-M

And the shy hearth-fairies
About the grate,
Blowing the turves
To a whiter heat.

All things on earth
To me are known,
For I have the gift
Of The Murrain Stone !



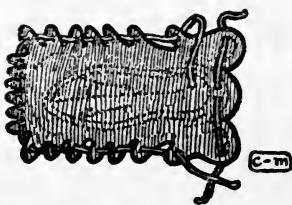
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I PUT MY FINGERS TO A ROSE.

I PUT my fingers to a rose,
 The darkest of its damask kind:
 I pricked my fingers to the quick,
 And left the glowing flower behind.
 Must I go bound,
 And you go free
 To snare another
 Upon the tree?
 Was ever heart born
 So poor in wit
 As to love the thorn
 That venom'd it!

I'll make a bed on yonder hill,
 And lay me sadly down to sleep:
 Would God I were beneath the clay,
 Or drown'd in the windy Deep !

Must I go bound,
 And you go free
 To snare another
 Upon the tree?
 Was ever heart born
 So poor in wit
 As to love the thorn
 That venom'd it !



THE GARTAN MOTHER'S ULLABY.

SLEEP, O babe, for the red-bee hums
 The silent twilight's fall :
 Aoibheall from the Grey Rock comes
 To wrap the world in thrall.

A leanhan O, my child, my joy,
 My love and heart's desire,
 The crickets sing you lullaby
 Beside the dying fire.

Dusk is drawn, and the Green Man's Thorn
 Is wreathed in rings of fog :
 Siabhra sails his boat till morn
 Upon the Starry Bog.

A leanhan O, the paly moon
 Hath brimmed her cusp in dew,
 And weeps to hear the sad sleep-tune
 I sing, O love, to you.

Faintly, sweetly, the chapel bell
 Rings o'er the valley dim :
 Tearmann's peasant voices swell
 In fragrant evening hymn.

A leanhan O, the low bell rings
 My little lamb to rest,
 Till night is past and morning sings
 Its music in your breast.



O BEAUTIFUL DARK WOMAN.

O BEAUTIFUL Dark Woman, weep no more.
 Weep not for thy princes who have gone from thee:
 they shall come again.
 Cease thy crying and thy lamentation.
 Thou shalt be raised up as a star-cluster.
 Thy hair shall shine as a river in the dusk, and
 thine eyes as the blue-bough when the summer is full.
 Thy neck and thy breasts shall smell as hazel-saplings
 fresh peeled.
 Thy paps shall flow as well-streams.
 Thy sons shall be as shields of findruiney about thy feet,
 and thy daughters as lilies strown on a mountain altar.
 Thy heart shall burn as the heart of red wine, and thy
 mouth shall utter mead and honey.
 So, Beautiful Woman of Sorrows, weep no more
 Weep not for thy princes who have gone from thee:
 they are upon the Deep.
 Cease thy crying and thy lamentation.
 The hour of thy deliverance is at hand.
 The castled ships draw near: they point their peaks for
 harbour.
 To-morrow thou shalt hold jubilee, with harps and songs
 and dancing.



THE
GOWDEN KNOWE.

AND we will go tae the Gowden Knowe,
 The Gowden Knowe,
 The Gowden Knowe,
 And we will go tae the Gowden Knowe,
 Up by the Gentle Bushes.

And we will gather a Christ-cross-row,
 A Christ-cross-row,
 A Christ-cross-row,
 And we will gather a Christ-cross-row
 O' hazel-rods and rushes.

There's not a babby in blae or brown,
 In blae or brown,
 In blae or brown,
 There's not a babby in blae or brown
 But will be there a-Maying.
 And a' the linnets in Tinkers' Town,
 In Tinkers' Town,
 In Tinkers' Town,
 And a' the linnets in Tinkers' Town
 Will come tae see us playing.

And we will skip in halliday shoes,
 In halliday shoes,
 In halliday shoes,
 And we will skip in halliday shoes
 Till night is on the Loaning.
 And then we'll search for a fairy-cruse,
 A fairy-cruse,
 A fairy-cruse,
 And then we'll search for a fairy-cruse
 Tae light us thro' the gloaming.



A NIGHT
PRAYER.

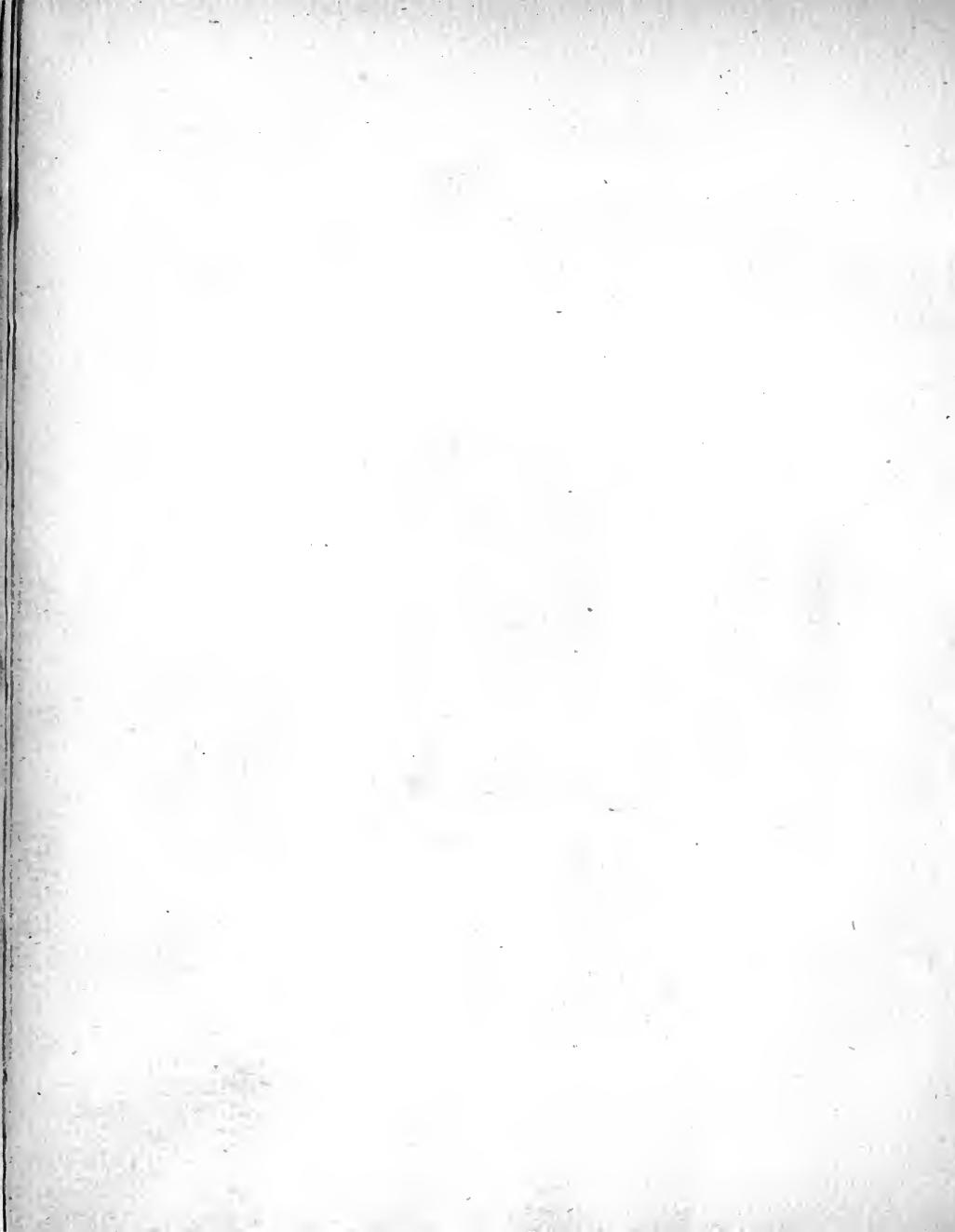
PRAY for us, Seachnal,
 Pray for us, Mel;
 Save us from sin
 And the cold stone of hell!

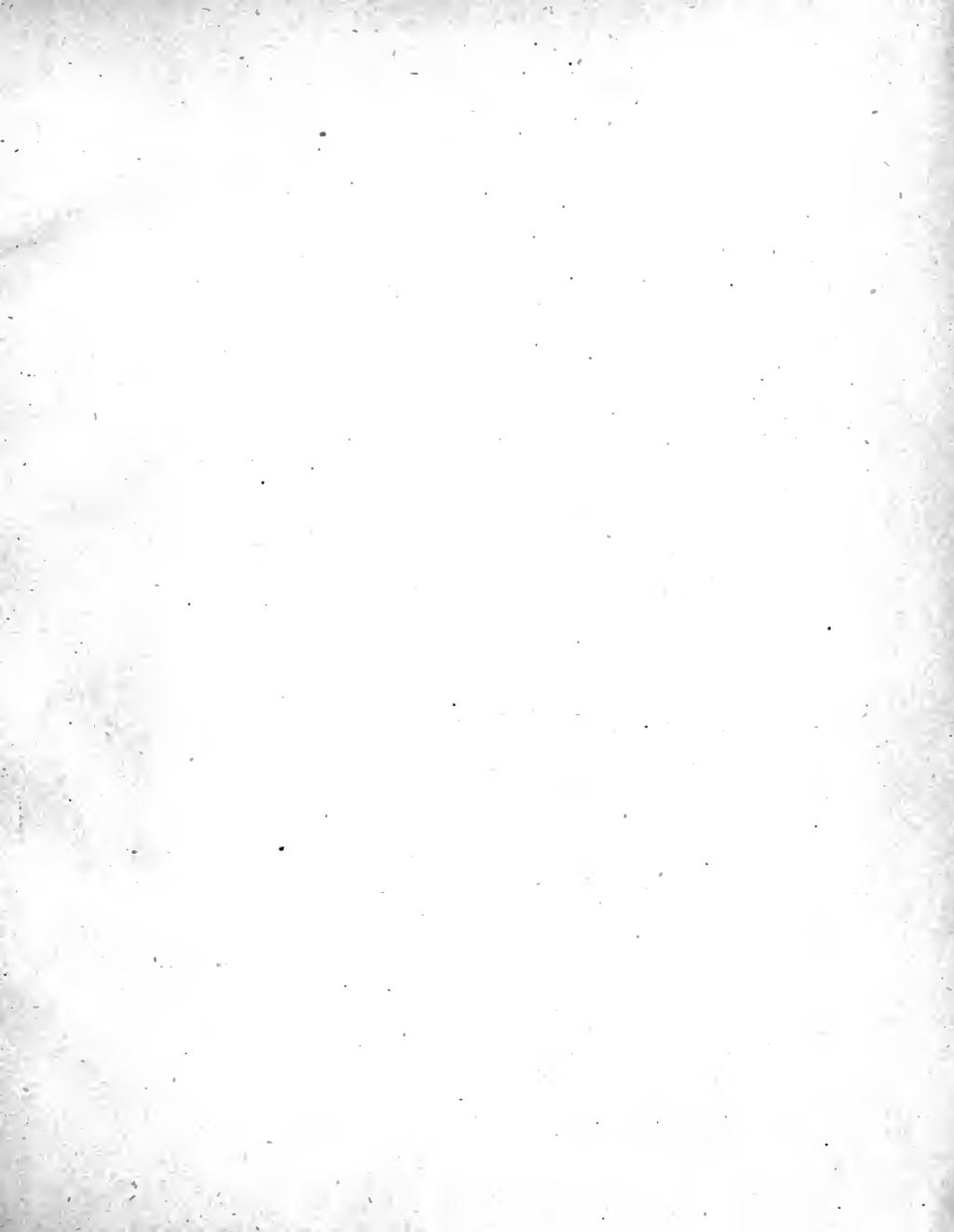
Brigid and Idè,
 And Eithne the Red,
 Spread out your mantles
 And cover my bed!

For Patraic's sweet gospel
 Has gone from my mind,
 And Satan is walking
 Abroad in the wind!









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